

Message Text

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R 011419Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8758

INFO AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

S E C R E T ADDIS ABABA 4853

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MASS, ET, US

SUBJECT: FURTHER REMARKS OF PRIMIN ON EMERGENCY
MILITARY ASSISTANCE

REF: ADDIS 4136

1. SUMMARY. PRIMIN ENDALKACHEW MAKONNEN CALLED ME IN APRIL 30 TO "RE-ENFORCE" HIS PREVIOUS REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY MILITARY ASSISTANCE, EMPHASIZE "URGENCY" OF ISSUE, AND ASK "ALL POSSIBLE ASSISTANCE" FROM EMBASSY ON THIS SUBJECT. HE INDICATED, HOWEVER, THAT HE WAS "VERY MUCH ENCOURAGED" BY REPORTS HE HAD RECEIVED FROM KIFLE WODAJO REGARDING LAST WEEK'S CONVERSATIONS IN WASHINGTON. IN COMMENTING ON INTERNAL ETHIOPIAN SITUATION PRIMIN EXPRESSED VIEW THAT CABINET IS ACQUIRING "INCREASING CONTROL" OF SITUATION AND THAT ARMY SUPPORT OF CABINET IS QUITE SOLID.

1. AT HIS REQUEST I CALLED ON PRIMIN AT MENELIK PALACE AFTERNOON APRIL 30. HE SAID HE WISHED TO "RE-ENFORCE" PRESENTATION REGARDING EMERGENCY MILITARY ASSISTANCE HE HAD MADE ON APRIL 13. IN MEANTIME HE HAD RECEIVED REPORT FROM ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADOR IN MOGADISCIO ON LARGE QUANTITIES OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT WHICH HAVE ARRIVED IN SOVIET SHIPS IN RECENT MONTHS (CF. PARA 2, ADDIS 4732). AFTER AGAIN

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DISCUSSING SOMALI INTENTIONS REGARDING ETHIOPIA ALONG LINES

REFTEL, BUT ADMITTING THAT FORTHCOMING OAU SUMMIT IN MOGADISCIO WILL INHIBIT AGGRESSIVE SOMALI ACTION UNTIL ITS CONCLUSION, HE CONTENDED THAT DANGER OF SOMALI ATTACK IS "STILL INCREASING". HE HAD HAD REPORTS OF KIFLE'S CONVERSATIONS WITH DEPSEC RUSH AND ASSTSEC EASUM AND FELT "VERY MUCH ENCOURAGED" BY THESE REPORTS. HE HOPED KIFLE WOULD BE ABLE SEE SECRETARY AFTER LATTER'S RETURN TO WASHINGTON. IN CONTRAST TO SITUATION A YEAR AGO, HE HAD IMPRESSION WASHINGTON NOW APPRECIATES DANGER TO WHICH IEG IS EXPOSED AND ITS ALARMING INFERIORITY IN EQUIPMENT. PRIMIN REQUESTED THAT EMBASSY DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE INFLUENCE WASHINGTON'S DECISION AND THAT IT PARTICULARLY STRESS URGENCY OF NEEDED DECISION AND ACTION.

3. I REPLIED THAT EMBASSY IN ITS REPORT HAD SUPPORTED KEY POINTS HE HAD MADE ON APRIL 13, AND THAT WE HAD IMMEDIATELY TRANSMITTED TO WASHINGTON THE REVISED LIST OF IEMF'S PRIORITY NEEDS TRANSMITTED TO ME BY MINISTER OF DEFENSE ON APRIL 23. IN SUMMARIZING REPORTS WE HAD RECEIVED ON KIFLE WODAJO'S CONVERSATIONS, I SAID THAT HIS PRESENTATION WAS CURRENTLY BEING CONSIDERED AT HIGHEST LEVELS IN WASHINGTON AND THAT KIFLE'S INDICATION OF IEG'S WILLINGNESS TO UNDERTAKE CASH PURCHASES AFTER GRANT AND CREDIT POSSIBILITIES HAD BEEN EXHAUSTED SHOULD HELP DEMONSTRATE DEPTH OF ETHIOPIAN CONCERN. PRIMIN COMMENTED THAT SITUATION SO SERIOUS "WE ARE READY TO MAKE ANY SACRIFICE".

4. IN COURSE OF CONVERSATION PRIMIN DISCUSSED ETHIOPIA'S INTERNAL SITUATION WITH AN IMPERTURBABILITY TYPICAL OF JOHN WAYNE SURROUNDED BY A TRIBE OF WAR-PAINTED APACHES. HE FELT SITUATION WAS COMING "INCREASINGLY UNDER CONTROL" DESPITE GREAT DIFFICULTIES OF SATISFYING EVERYONE'S HIGH EXPECTATIONS AT PRESENT. THE CABINET WAS NOW MORE ASSURED THAN PREVIOUSLY OF ARMY'S SUPPORT. BOTH THE CABINET AND THE ARMY WANT A TRULY PROGRESSIVE GOVERNMENT AND, MINDFUL OF EXPERIENCES WITH MILITARY JUNTAS ELSEWHERE IN AFRICA, ARMY HAS NO DESIRE SEIZE POWER AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR ITSELF. ARMY WISHES THE EMPEROR TO REMAIN IN POWER THOUGH IT CONSIDERS THAT, AT AGE 82, HE CANNOT AND SHOULD NOT WIELD AUTHORITY AS SECRET

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IN PAST. PRIMIN THOUGHT HIS RECENT TALKS WITH ARMY OFFICERS HAD HELPED ENLIST THEIR UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT AND HE IS ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN "BUILDING BRIDGES TO THE ARMY." HE POINTED OUT THAT WATER AND ELECTRICITY WERE FUNCTIONING THAT DAY DESPITE PREVIOUS STRIKE THREATS AND EXPRESSED BELIEF THAT "TROUBLEMAKERS" WILL MODERATE THEIR ACTIVITIES AS THEY INCREASINGLY REALIZE GOVERNMENT HAS ARMY SUPPORT. PRIMIN MENTIONED THAT IN HIS CONVERSATION WITH ARMY OFFICERS THEY

HAD CONSISTENTLY DEMONSTRATED FRIENDLY ATTITUDE TOWARD US AND HAD FREQUENTLY INQUIRED WHETHER US WAS SYMPATHETIC TO PRESENT REGIME. (PRIMIN PRESUMABLY ANSWERED IN AFFIRMATIVE.)

5. I RESPONDED THAT AMERICANS ALSO HAD STRONG FEELINGS OF FRIENDSHIP AND SYMPATHY FOR ETHIOPIAN OFFICERS BECAUSE OF COMMON KOREAN EXPERIENCE, TRAINING OF MANY ETHIOPIAN OFFICERS IN US, AND ADVISORY RELATIONSHIPS WITH ARMED FORCES HERE. WITH REGARD TO INTERNAL SITUATION I WAS VERY IMPRESSED WITH THE BROAD CONSENSUS WHICH APPEARS EXIST IN ETHIOPIA TODAY REGARDING GENERAL DIRECTION IN WHICH EVENTS SHOULD MOVE. ALTHOUGH THERE APPEAR BE SCATTERED RADICAL ELEMENTS WHICH WOULD LIKE TERMINATE MONARCHY, AND UNDOUBTEDLY SOME REACTIONARY ELEMENTS WHO WOULD LIKE RESTORE STATUS QUO ANTE, I HAD IMPRESSION THAT VAST MAJORITY OF URBAN AND RURAL ETHIOPIANS AGREE ON DESIRABILITY OF RAPID MOVEMENT IN A PROGRESSIVE AND LIBERAL DIRECTION. ENORMOUS PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES REMAIN BECAUSE OF WIDESPREAD INTENSE IMPATIENCE, BUT CONSENSUS IS NEVERTHELESS IMPRESSIVE.

6. PRIMIN AGREED AND SAID IT WAS ESSENTIAL THAT COUNTRY BE PROTECTED AGAINST DANGER OF EXTERNAL ATTACK DURING THIS VERY PROMISING PERIOD OF INTERNAL TRANSFORMATION.

7. IN CONCLUSION I PROMISED PRIMIN I WOULD STRESS IN MY REPORT URGENCY OF A US DECISION ON HIS REQUEST, PARTICULARLY BECAUSE IEG NEEDS THIS INFORMATION IN ORDER MAKE CRITICAL DECISIONS OF ITS OWN. I ALSO EXPRESSED BEST WISHES FOR HIM IN HIS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TASK.

8. COMMENT. ALTHOUGH I CANNOT BE SURE THAT KIFLE'S REPORTS HAVE BEEN AS OPTIMISTIC AS PRIMIN'S REMARKS SUGGESTED, IT APPEARS THAT BOTH KIFLE AND PRIMIN HAVE ACQUIRED INCREASED
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CONFIDENCE IN WASHINGTON'S RESPONSE AS A RESULT OF KIFLE'S CONVERSATIONS.

9. IT IS HARD TO BELIEVE PRIMIN IS ACTUALLY AS CONFIDENT REGARDING INTERNAL SITUATION AS HE INDICATED. HIS REMARKS MAY WELL HAVE BEEN INFLUENCED BY CONVICTION THAT USG IS UNLIKELY PROVIDE INCREASED MILITARY ASSISTANCE IF IT TAKES PESSIMISTIC VIEW REGARDING FUTURE OF EXISTING GOVERNMENT.

10. I HOPE THAT USG IN ADDRESSING LARGE DIMENSIONS OF PRIMIN'S REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE WILL ALSO ADDRESS FACT THAT ONLY \$3 MILLION OF \$11.3 MILLION GRANT PROGRAM FOR FY-74 HAS BEEN FUNDED, AND THAT USG ABILITY TO MEET EVEN ITS PREVIOUS COMMITMENT TO IEG APPEARS THUS FAR VERY

MUCH IN DOUBT.
WYMAN

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